

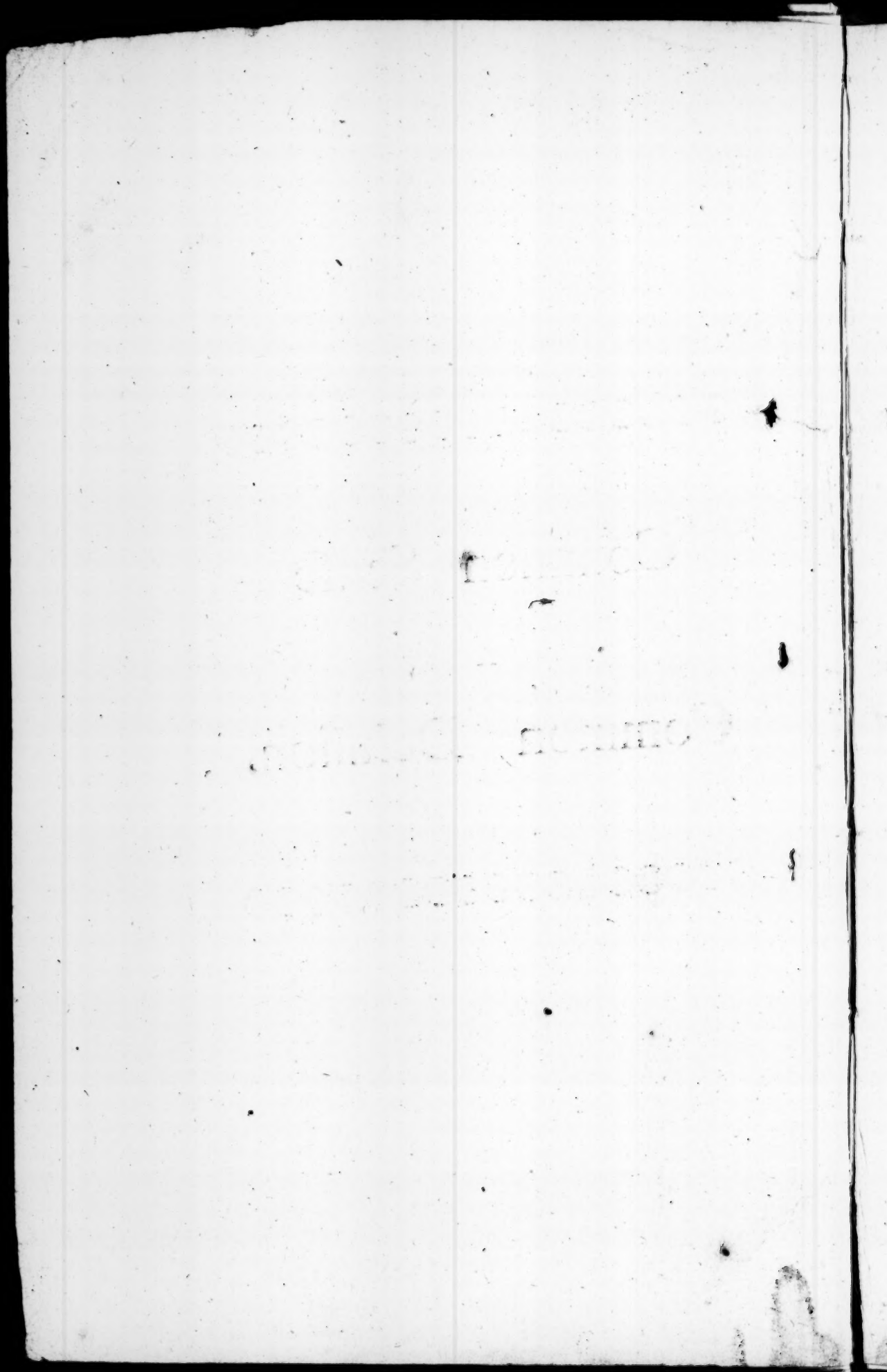


Common Sense

A

Common Delusion.





COMMON SENSE

A

Common Delusion.

Exaltia recognita & OR, terra sapientia.

The generally-received Notions of

NATURAL CAUSES, || RELIGION,
DEITY, || VIRTUE, &c.

As exhibited in

Mr. POPE's Essay on Man,

PROVED

Ridiculous, impious, and the Effect of Infatuation;
and the chief Cause of the present formidable
Growth of Vice among Christians, and the great
Stumbling-block in the Way of Infidels.

*Earnestly recommended to the Perusal of all Men
of Good-Sense, and Lovers of Truth.*

BY

ALMONIDES a believing Heathen.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,

Printed for T. Reynolds, at the Golden Leg, in St. John's Lane;
and sold by R. Baldwin, at the Rose, in Pater-Noster-Row;
W. Owen, at Homer's Head, near Temple-Bar, R. Davis,
the Corner of Sackville-Street, Piccadilly; and all
other Booksellers in Town and Country.

MDCCLI.

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TO THE
READER.

CANDID READER,

I Do assure thee, that what is here said, is out of a sincere Regard to the Cause of Truth and Virtue, and not with any malicious Intention to stain the Character of Mr. *Pope*, for with the same Spirit that I have exposed the false Notions of the Poet, I could have eulogized and commended the Man, had it lain in my Way. For, as I declare myself, I am indeed, a Heathen, and of no Party, and therefore not against Mr. *Pope* nor any of his Friends. And as I have ridiculed his Idol God, without displaying the Nature of the true one, I promise thee, if Heaven permit, I will, in a very short Time, demonstrate to
the

the Senses of Men, which alone is properly Demonstration, upon philosophical Principles, hitherto unknown to the World, the Existence of the one God and Father of Jesus Christ, and of Christ himself, together with that of the Heathen Gods. And if *common Sense* be offended at this, or any Thing that I may hereafter say, let her resent it, for I do not write to please her, but only to edify Men of good Sense, and Lovers of Truth. I say, let her resent it, *for this Day*, by the Strength of the God of Truth, I defy *the Armies* of common Sense, *let her give me a Man, that we may fight together.*

I am thine in the Truth,

ALMONIDES.

COMMON SENSE

A

COMMON DELUSION, &c.

HOWEVER Men may differ in Points of a speculative Nature, yet they ought all to unite in the common Cause of Virtue, and endeavour to discover Vice under whatever Colours it may conceal itself; and find out the true Cause of its growing Power at any Time, in order to suppress it. And as at present it begins to be formidable in this Island, and Men are threatened with the dangerous Consequences of a total Corruption of Manners, and no Remedy has yet been found out, that is adequate to the Grievousness of the Malady, the sincere Advice even of a Heathen ought not to be thought altogether contemptible. For though the Heathens be ignorant of the sublime Mysteries of Christianity, yet many of them have shewn themselves great Masters of Moral Philosophy and Friends to Virtue. And as his mental Eye, by reason of the Difference of his Education, does not see through the same Medium as that of a Christian, he may observe Vice in a different Point of View from what the other can, and consequently discover some of her latent Springs of Action among Christians, which a Christian himself, because of the Prejudices of his Education, must be utterly blind to.

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As

As for Instance, it is the Opinion of many, that it is base or low-priced Liquors, such as Gin, that at present is corrupting the Manners of the vulgar and labouring Part of Mankind in this Kingdom. Others lay most of the Blame on common Women and Gaming. But it is my Opinion, and, I believe, I can prove it, that it is neither common Gin, nor common Whores, but the *common Sense* of Christian Societies which is the true and only Cause of all Vice and Immorality among all Ranks of them. By *common Sense* I mean the most generally received Notions of Things in any Community, and the common Way of judging and reasoning concerning them ; and not only these but also all private Opinions of Men which are not inconsistent with *common Sense*. In short, the *common Sense* of Christians may be said to include every thing but the religious Opinions of us Heathens, and the Doctrines of the Lawgivers, Prophets, Apostles, and Teachers of the *Jews*. In the former there is a Piety of its Kind, and good Sense ; and in the latter a Wisdom sublime and truly divine, and greatly becoming the Votaries of the holy Gods of the *Hebrews*, for whom many of our antient Heathens had a great Veneration, and therefore, forsaking their own Gods, became Worshipers of them only ; finding upon Comparison, that they were infinitely preferable to the Gods of the Nations. But this we cannot do now, because at present their antient Votaries are not countenanced by them ; so that we cannot enter into their Service that way, and the *common Sense* of
Christians

Christians, which we abhor, permits us not to embark with them.

It is not the common Gin, which they blame for the Corruption of their Morals, which we are afraid of; for we know it is not that which goes into the Body which defiles a Man, but that which is bred in his Head and cherished in his Heart, even *common Sense*, a thing infinitely more pernicious to human Societies than common Gin, or even common Women, and that because she is in great Repute among them, even as great as *Diana* among the antient *Ephesians*. And therefore, except she can be brought into Disrepute, and made as scandalous as a common Whore, a Reformation of Manners will always remain a thing impracticable, and absolutely impossible; as shall be made appear in the following Reflections.

And in order to compass this End, we ought to make Examples of some of the most notorious Dealers in *common Sense*, that others may be ashamed, and deterred from the like Practices for the future. I shall pitch therefore at present on Mr. *Pope*, a celebrated Poet among the Christians, which he never could have been, without being a great Master of *common Sense*, that he might adapt himself to the Taste of this deluded, or, as the Christians call it, enlightened Age, wherein it is in greater Esteem, if possible, than ever it was in former Ages. This Poet's *Essay on Man*, as he calls it, which I have now in my Eye, is so full of *common Sense* that my intended Brevity will not allow me to do Justice to every Passage in it. I shall confine my Observations, therefore, to some of his brightest Thoughts up and down,

as they occur to my Memory, concerning Deity, Virtue, Religion, and Happiness ; together with the Consistency and Closeness of his way of reasoning on those Subjects, wherein, I suppose, consist the greatest Charms of *common Sense*.

And to begin ; a Man can hardly enter this rich Magazine of human Wisdom without striking his Foot against the Threshold, it is raised so exceeding high.

Awake, my Lelius, leave all meaner things

To low Ambition, and the Pride of Kings.

Where I first observe, that low Ambition supposes high Ambition ; but Vanity itself, without which there is no Ambition at all, can aspire no higher than Crowns and Scepters. For where there is no Vanity the Soul is all Humility, Lowliness, and Meekness. Yet though there can be really no Ambition higher than that which aims at Empire, yet an ill-turned Head may imagine something higher, as Mr. *Pope* must have done here ; for as all Reasoning, Judging, and Thinking must consist in comparing Things with Things, and thereby seeing their essential or imaginary Differences, he must have thought that the Kings and Princes of the Earth were but low-lived, black-guard Fellows in Comparison of himself, whose Ambition aimed at no less than making him the Author of this grand Essay on Human Nature, as he believed it would certainly be, if he was the Doer of it. Now as there is manifestly no Wisdom, Understanding, nor good Sense in this way of thinking, I must call it common Sense. For true Wisdom, good Understanding, or good Sense, are Rarities, and not common things ;

things; and by this we know common Sense from these excellent Qualities: for there is no way of knowing Things but by their Opposites. Truth is a rare thing, but Falshood, Vanity, and Nonsense are common. Whatever therefore Truth cannot be predicated of, is common; and consequently *common Sense* includes all false or unjust Thoughts, all puffed and vain Thoughts, and all what is called Nonsense: for it is not proper to call any Thought or Proposition Nonsense, because Nonsense is no Sense, or no Thought at all; but no Thought has no Existence, whereas what is called Nonsense does exist, and therefore it is not no Sense, but false, bad, or common Sense. We ought not therefore, on meeting with false, puffed, vain and foolish Thoughts, to call out Fustian, Bombast, Nonsense, Madness, Folly, Lies, &c. but barely call them common Sense, which is the only true and proper way of expressing one's self on such Occasions.

This being premised, let us next see what our Poet proposes to do here, that we may the better judge whether he performs what he undertakes. And this we have at Line 5th, and downward: where his ample Views are no less than to

*Expatiate free o'er all this Scene of Man;
A mighty Maze! but not without a Plan;*

.....
*Try what the open, what the Covert yield.
The latent Traits, the giddy Heights explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar.*

Here one would think he was going to open the wide Landskip of Nature, and shew us the Ways of Providence with Man, and his deep-laid
Scheme

Scheme of bringing Good out of whatever is evil ; or would frustrate his grand Design and Aim, which is to shew the Glory of his Wisdom and Power, and effect the final Happiness and Perfection of his Creatures, by making their Folly ripen into Wisdom, and their Sorrows end in Joy. But this would not have been a Work of *common Sense*, and therefore out of Mr. *Pope's* reach. For he cannot understand how the Creator brings Good out of Evil, and therefore, he tells us, he keeps mixing and compounding them, as will appear below, instead of dividing and separating, and precipitating the Dregs of Evil to the Bottom, that his Work may be purified and refined ; which is impossible to be true, and is therefore *common Sense*.

In short Mr. *Pope* is so far from attempting to explore the *latent Tracts* of Nature, as he promised, that on the contrary he discourages all Inquiry of that Nature, at his first setting out, by telling his Reader, that he is as dull as an Ox, and utterly incapable of comprehending the Works of Nature, or at all of knowing for what End or Use he was made. These are his Words :

*When the proud Steed shall know why Man restrains
His fiery Course, or drives him o'er the Plains ;
When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the Clod,
Now wears a Garland, an Egyptian God ;
Then shall Man's Pride and Dulness comprehend
His Actions, Passions, Being, Use, and End ;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd, and why
This Hour a Slave, the next a Deity. Ep. i. l. 61.*

This is manifestly teaching Man to despair of ever improving himself, or attaining to any more
Under-

Understanding than that of the Beasts of the Field, which the generality of Mankind are of themselves too apt to believe; for they glory in their brutal Ignorance, because they think it will screen them from Justice; and hate Knowledge and Understanding, as their greatest Enemies, because thereby they think they would be rendered inexcusable for living a vicious Life, which otherwise, as they imagine, they may do with Impunity. It is a grand and fundamental Principle with the Vulgar, that their Ignorance will palliate their Crimes, and render them Objects of Pity, in the Eye of Justice; and therefore he who endeavours to confirm them in such a Belief, does more towards the Corruption of their Manners than all other Temptations put together can do. For as long as a Man adheres to Truth, though he stumble and fall many times, yet she will raise him up again. But if he once let her go, and begin to imbibe the Doctrines of *common Sense*, such as these of our Poet, the *moral Sense* will soon be extinguished in him, and the Recovery of his Virtue, without a Miracle, rendered impossible.

But every thing this celebrated Author says, has not only a Tendency to debauch and corrupt the Manners of Mankind, but, throughout the whole Performance, Contradictions and Inconsistencies reign triumphant over all Understanding and good Sense; which shews what the common Sense of Christians must be, when such a one as Mr. *Pope* can obtain a Character among them.

As for Instance, here, he bids a Man despair of being wiser than a Brute. But afterwards, forgetting this (*Ep. iii. l. 1.*) he says,

*Learn, Dulness, learn! the Universal Cause
Acts to one End, but acts by various Laws.*

Which is bidding us take a Lesson, which the Brutes cannot take. But he is still the Man of *common Sense* for all this. For though his Brightness here commands our Dulness to learn, which is encouraging what he cried down before, yet he acts to one End, for he does not bid us learn any Good. For God's Law, Rule, or Manner of Action must be uniform, and one, in all Souls and in all Bodies, or there can be no Truth in him, any more than in Mr. *Pope*. If he acted, for Instance, by one Rule visibly, and by another invisibly, the visible Face of Things would continually misrepresent his invisible Works, and affirm them to be what they are not. His visible Works ought to declare what he is always doing behind the Scene, and if they do not, they lie continually, or, which is the same, speak *common Sense* like our Author. Mr. *Pope* therefore could not have said that the Divine Rule of Action was manifold, because he knew it to be so, but because he thought it would sound better and shew his own Wisdom to be more extensive in discovering many, than one simple Law of Action only. The Works and the Wisdom of the true God are manifold, we know; but his Manner of working is simple and one, and is the true Reason of their being admirable

But again, why must our Dulness learn? Is it because Ignorance is an Imperfection? No, by no Means.

Means. For he concludes from our being as ignorant as Brutes (p. 9.) that we are therefore perfect: which I take to be exquisite *common Sense*.

*Then say not, Man's imperfect, Heav'n in Fault;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought.* Ep. i. l. 69.
But why as perfect as he ought? Why, because whatever is, is right. For,

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,

May, must be right, as relative to all. Ib. l. 51.

That is to say, the Perfection of the whole Creation taken together consists in a due Mixture of Good and Evil, that is, of Good, physical or natural, and moral, which is Virtue; and of Evil, physical, and moral, which is Vice. From whence it plainly follows, that if all Men were virtuous, or only less vicious than they are, this World of ours at least, would go to Ruin: which is a Conclusion that Mr. *Pope* himself will own, as will presently appear.

And if things be so, the Magistrate, in endeavouring to suppress Vice, knows not what he is doing, because whatever is being right, at any time, if by his Severity, he should prevail so far, as to lessen the Quantity of Vice in this Mixture, he would deface the Works of God, if not destroy the Whole. If this be not encouraging, nay justifying Vice, I know not what can be called so: and yet this is undeniably *common Sense*. It is therefore the *common Sense* of Christians which is the great Corrupter of their Manners, because they have, by the Indulgence of their Magistrates, cultivated and improved it more than ever we Heathens durst do. None of our

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Magistrates

Magistrates would suffer such a Book as this to come abroad in the World, nor let the Author of it go unpunished.

But this, bad as it is, is not the worst Lesson he gives us, for wrong Notions of the Gods will corrupt the Manners of Men more than all other Errors put together; for he who has not in him a reasonable Fear of the Gods, wants the main Spring of Virtue, and sole Beginning of true Wisdom. He who would find out the true God and Father of all, or, as we call him, the *Hominum Pater atque Deorum*, ought to find out some Effect in Nature which can be proved not producible by inferior Gods, or secondary Causes, or he can never distinguish him from the Vicegerent Gods, true or false, nor even from a mere Chimera, which has no Existence but in a deluded Imagination. But this our Poet does not so much as aim at, though he promised to trace him in his Works, (Ep. i. l. 21.) but tells us in the Gross, and a gross Thought it is, as ever entered into the Head of the most stupid Mortal, that

*All are but Parts of one stupendous Whole,
Whose Body Nature is, and God the Soul;
That chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the Earth, as in th' etherial Frame;
Warms in the Sun, refreshes in the Breeze,
Glow in the Stars, and blossoms in the Trees;
Lives through all Life, extends thro' all Extent,
Spreads undivided, and operates unspent.*

*Breathes in our Souls, informs our moral Part
As full, as perfect in a Hair as Heart.* Ep. i. l. 259.

From this Description of his one God, it is plain he is dreaming of an *Anima Mundi*, or, which
is

is the same, he is describing a prodigious great Animal, of which every thing that exists is a Part. But if this be true, then the Universe, or this whole System of Matter, must either have been co-eternal with its Soul, or this Soul and Body must have grown up together from a Seed, or the Soul must have been originally, and consequently naturally, without a Body.

If the first of these Suppositions be true, then his God is a necessary Agent, or a Cause acting by Necessity, and not by free Choice, and therefore can be no more a God than the Sun, or the Moon, or this Earth may be. For if the Sun, for Instance, had been eternal, the Light would have been co-eternal with him, not by Choice any more than now, but by Necessity. So that such a God would be the Author of this Universe in no other Sense, nor in a perfecter Way, than the Sun is Author of Light or Heat. Or, if the second be true, *viz.* that this great Soul and Body grew up together from a Seed, then he is no more a God than an Elephant may be, because something must have been before him to sow the Seed of him. Or, lastly, if this Soul was originally and naturally without a Body, it must have built its Body afterwards, and then entered into it; but then it could have been in no properer Sense the Soul of such a Body, than a Man may be said to be the Soul of a House. And if so, he cannot animate the Universe any more than a Man can animate his Lodging-Room.

Or again, if, according to Mr. *Pope*, God be to the Universe what the Soul of Man or any other Animal is to its Body, he must act blindly

or without any Choice at all, or, which is the same, without knowing what he is doing, for so the Soul acts as Animator of the Body. The Blood and Juices do not wait for its arbitrary Command to circulate, and nourish the Body, and yet without it they would all stagnate in a Moment. Whether the Soul of Man be asleep or awake, wise or foolish, conscious or not conscious, the animal Functions are still performed, while the Body is in Health. And when it is not so, or when any Member suffers by Gout, Gravel, or any such Malady, the Soul cannot help it: nor consequently can this Soul of the World help us, who, according to Mr. *Pope*, are but Parts or Members of its natural Body: that is, by his Wisdom, Power, or Skill he cannot help us, any more than he can make himself: because what is done in us, by him, is not done by Choice, but by Necessity, which excludes all the Effects of Wisdom, Skill, or Contrivance.

Now that which cannot help us when it will, cannot hurt us when it will, and is therefore neither an Object of Love, Veneration, nor Fear, and consequently is no God at all, but a mere Chimera; and yet this is what Mr. *Pope* would palm upon the World for the one great Father of Gods and Men.

But this is not all; for he not only makes his Idol to fill the Place of the one Father, but also of all the other Gods, whether true or false. For if it be his own Spirit which breathes in every Soul, or if he be the Soul of every Soul, he must be the Spirit of every Spirit, for, as this Poet says, all are Parts of him, and he lives through all

all Life, and therefore every Spirit and Soul must be only partial Conceptions of his own Spirit and Soul, and consequently he must not only live and breathe, but also think in every Soul. In the Proud he must be proud, in the Vain he must think vainly, in the covetous Soul he must covet, in the Whore he must lust, in the Rogue he must lie, and in the Murderer he must be cruel, malicious, and bloody-minded.

It is true that some of our own Gods are lustful and cruel, and demand human Sacrifices; but then, as we have many Gods, we have our Choice, and may change them, if we do not love them; but the Men of *common Sense*, as they know none but one God, have no Choice at all: and where there is no Choice, there can be no Virtue. And if this be their God, whom their Poet here describes, he will certainly be the Ruin of all Societies of them at last, a full and settled Belief of his Existence being inconsistent with the least Grain of true Virtue or Morality among Men. Because, as this Poet says, whatever is, must be right if there be but one God only, for then with him there is

—*No high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.*

Ep. i. l. 271.

That is, he leaves no Room for higher nor lower, whether celestial, terrestrial, or infernal Gods. He is alone both Good and Bad, Black and White, Light and Darkness, Love and Hatred, God and Devil. For this Reason he is the Support of all Vice and Immorality; for as this one individual God is in all, and actuates all, the Spirit of the Murderer,

Murderer, the Traitor, or the Adulterer, is as much a Portion of his Spirit, as that of the Saint, the Hero, and the Saviour of a Country, or a World.

In short, if this animal God has any natural Inclinations or Desires at all, he must have all the Inclinations and Appetites of all Souls whatever, because he is the whole, or universal Soul; for every essential Property of the Parts must be a Property of the Whole, excepting Immensity, Infinity, or any such Properties as may belong to him barely as a Whole; and consequently the Gratification of all these Appetites by Turns must be the Pleasure of this Deity, and the Sum of his Happiness. And if so, then every Soul, in gratifying its own Appetites, is at the same Time doing the Will of this God. And hence it clearly follows that all Abstinence, all Mortification of sensual Appetites, and whatever is properly called Virtue, must be an Abomination to such a God, because it manifestly tends to the Diminution of his Happiness.

At this Rate the Happiness of Man, and the Happiness of God would be inconsistent. For the Reason why Man ought to curb his sensual Appetites is, because the Happiness arising from the Gratification of them is not durable as his Being, and therefore he ought to learn to be without them, seeing he must part with the Objects of them. Whereas was Man in the Flesh immortal, or had always the same Body, as Mr. *Pope's* God is supposed to have, then his Happiness would coincide with the Happiness of such a God, and would consist in the Gratification
of

of every Lust and Appetite. And consequently what now is Virtue would then be Vice; and what now prepares Man for future Happiness, would be esteemed destructive of the human Nature: because then all future Happiness would be only a Continuation of the present.

Again: if the Universe, Soul and Body taken together, be God, there can be no Spirits nor no invisible Beings, nor no invisible World, above or below, no Heaven, no Hell, nor any Receptacle for departed Souls; for such a God, being an Animal, cannot father Spirits but Animals only, and we know every Thing, that is not eternal, must be fathered. And this is a Doctrine so agreeable to the common Sense of at least *British* Christians, that, if they would be consistent with themselves, they ought to acknowledge Mr. *Pope's* God and every Thing that has been said here concerning him, for upon any other Terms they cannot be allowed to hold it: and then Vice may reign triumphant for ever among them. For no Man then can have any Reason to blame himself for any thing he does, except for doing it openly, or heedlessly suffering himself to be detected.

But Mr. *Pope* himself seems to be conscious that his Notion of a God would not stand a strict Examination: or what does he mean by these Words?

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The only Science of Mankind is Man.* Ep. ii. l. 1.
Here he forbids us to do what just before he was doing himself, and teaching us to do. He was before describing God as a great huge Animal, of which Man was a Part, and if so, how can
Man

Man study himself without prying into the Nature of God? If a Man ought not to pry into the Divine Nature, then it must be his Duty to embrace any God that is preached to him, without asking any Questions, and indeed he needs not, if there be but one. But we Heathens know better things, and therefore are not to be so imposed on. If a Man has no Business to enquire into the Nature of Deity, why did Mr. *Pope* meddle with it? Or if he has, why does Mr. *Pope* forbid him, but because he would have his great Animal to pass for a God without Examination?

But perhaps he had no other End in this than in being inconsistent, which seems to be his Rule of Writing, for he never deviates from it. First he says, it is the Duty of Man to search out God in his Works, (Ep. i. l. 22.) and then he calls that here Presumption. At one time all is Order and Harmony (Ep. i. l. 280.) and, at another Time, all is Confusion and Error (Ep. ii. l. 10.) Man is sole Judge of Truth, and yet is made to wander in an endless Maze of Error, which is making him no Judge of it at all.

The whole Creation is a Scale of Beings, as Worlds upon Worlds, Angels, Men, Beasts, Birds, Fishes and Insects, all linked together in such a ticklish Manner (Ep. ii. l. 235.) that if any of the smallest Things should happen to be jostled out of its Place, the Heavens would fall about our Ears, the Spheres would fly off in Tangents, and all this stately Fabric of Nature would be hurled into Perdition, as Mr. *Pope* and *common Sense* will assure us. And yet, forgetting this, in another Place, he tells us, (Ep. iii. l. 150 and 240.) that

that this Order and Subordination of Beings was broke long ago, and the World turned upside down ; and that not only Angels and Men broke their Chain, but his imaginary Animal God was dethroned : for he says he reigned only in the State of Nature, as he calls it, before Tyrants and other Gods, who inverted the World, and counter-worked its Cause, began to rule. And yet the celestial Spheres still keep their Places, we know ; and not only so, but whatever is, is still right with Man ; (Ep. i. l. 285.) which notwithstanding cannot be true, though we will allow it to be *common Sense*, except all had been wrong when this one God reigned.

But would not one wonder how Tyrants, who are, according to Mr. *Pope*, but Parts of his God, should counter-work him, and spoil his grand Scheme ? We do not see that any of the Members of our Bodies can do so. And one would think that the Members of God's Body should be better governed than those of our Bodies. But it is still more wonderful that our Heathen Gods, whom he takes to be nothing at all, should have risen up against the one God, and corrupted the Golden Age that Mr. *Pope* dreams of. But then in Answer to this he will tell us, that it was Superstition only that was the Cause of all this Disturbance. (Ep. iii. l. 246.) But Superstition among Christians is a false or vain way of worshipping the true God, and therefore there never could have been any such Superstition among us, for we never were Worshippers of the Gods of *Israel*, whom alone I believe to be true since the time I have been acquainted with their Oracles and

Laws. And it is not proper to call our own Worship Superstition, because it is true in its Kind, though the Objects may be called false, or undeserving of Divine Honours. Men of *common Sense* indeed seem to think otherwise, as is natural to them, for they make one of the most eminent Doctors of Jewish Christianity call the *Athenians* superstitious; but he was a Man of better Sense than to do so, for he only says that they were *ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστεροι*, apparently very religious, because of the many Images he saw in their City dedicated to the Gods.

But, as he supposes that in his Golden Age all Men worshipped one God, let us take Superstition in the Christian Sense of that Word, and then his Argument is, that a false or vain Way of worshipping the one true God produced false or imaginary Gods, which is exceedingly unnatural; for a false or vain Way of worshipping the one God could not possibly have had any other Effect upon the Minds of the People than giving them false Notions of him, or ascribing to him Properties unworthy of him.

One would think this was all the Argument he could raise upon the Word Superstition, but we are mistaken of this Author, for he means by Superstition the Fear of the Gods, which is not Superstition, but Religion, as has been observed.

Fear made her Devils, and weak Hope her Gods;

.....
And Hell was built on Spite, and Heaven on Pride.

Ep. iii. l. 256. and 262.

Here

Here it ought to be observed that when he says Fear made her Devils, he must mean, if he has any Meaning at all, that the Fear of the Devils made Devils, which is excellent *common Sense*. Now the Devils, Δαίμονες or Demons, are in our Sense of the Word, and in that of the Prophets and Apostles of the Jews, Gods; hence Plato calls the supreme God, μεγίστον Δαίμονα, the greatest Demon, and Δεισιδαιμονία is called Religion or the Fear of the Gods. But how could Religion or Fear of Gods or Devils make Gods? For does not Religion or Fear of the Gods suppose Gods previous to such Fear? But the Men of *common Sense* will reply here and say, that this Fear is not natural to Men, but raised in them by the Prejudices of Education, and thereby they were made to imagine there were such invisible Beings as Gods and Devils. But I grant it was not natural for Men to have had such a Fear in them without the Prejudices of Education. And what is the true Consequence of this? Why, that there certainly must be such Beings, and that Men must have got the Notion of them by a traditional Revelation from the first Fathers of the Nations, and these from *Noah*. For as it was not natural for Man to have thought of these Things without being taught, it is manifest that some of the first Fathers must have had a Revelation concerning these invisible Beings. And hence it is plain that Religion, true or false, proves a Revelation from God, some time or other. And therefore with us Heathens, to say that Hope or Fear made Gods or Devils, or at all to deny the Existence of the inferior Gods, would be deemed Atheism.

And there is good Reason for it, for if there be not evil Gods there can be no good Gods, because the Good, on such a Supposition, would necessarily be both Good and Evil like Mr. *Pope's* God; but such contrary Qualities could not subsist in one Being, but would mutually destroy one another; and then such a Being, if it ever had existed, would be annihilated, by the Loss of its Properties; for it is self-evident that that which has no Properties, is nothing at all.

Thus it is plain that though Mr. *Pope* talks about a God, yet no Atheist would have dared to give broader Hints than he has done, that there is none at all. And the same is to be said of his Notions of Virtue, as I shall next make appear from several shining Instances of his Knowledge and Penetration on that Subject. And the first, I here take Notice of, is

*Nor Virtue, Male or Female, can we name,
But what grows on Pride, or grows on Shame.*

Ep. ii. l. 179.

This is first contradicting himself, as is usual; for he says that in those happy Days when his one God reigned, there was no Pride, and consequently no Virtue. (Ep. iii. l. 153.) And secondly it is contradicting the infallible Oracles of the holy Gods of *Israel*, where we are told, that when Man was in a State of Purity and Innocence, there was no Shame. (*Gen.* ii. 25.) And thirdly it is contradicting good Sense, which assures us that true Virtue must be founded on Humility, and a total Disinterestedness or Self-denial, in a Man's worldly Capacity. For Pride or Vanity is so far from being the Foundation of Virtue, properly

so called, that it makes a Man abominable in the Eyes of the holy Gods, and likewise to his Fellow Creature, so far as he is sensible of it.

But our Poet does not seem to approve of a Virtue founded on Pride himself, and therefore he has invented another Sort of Virtue more agreeable to the Nature of his one God. For as his God is a Mixture of all the Gods put together, so the Virtue that he recommends to us is a Mixture of all the Passions mild, and fierce; as Love, Complacence, fiery Anger, and Indignation, humble Hope, lofty Pride and Ambition, Lust, Hatred and Malice, and all Uncharitableness, confused together, and made up, as it were, into an Electuary, according to the Art of the Apothecary. His Recipe is thus :

*Passions, like Elements, though born to fight,
Yet mix'd and soften'd in his Work unite:
These, 'tis enough to temper and employ.
But what composes Man, can Man destroy?
Suffice that Reason keep to Nature's Road,
Subject, compound them, follow her and God.
Love, Hope, and Joy, fair Pleasure's smiling Train,
Hate, Fear, and Grief, the Family of Pain,
These mix'd with Art, and to due Bounds confin'd,
Make and maintain the Balance of the Mind.*

Ep. ii. l. 101.

The Beauties of *common Sense* here are so sparkling, that they must attract every Eye; such as, *keep to Nature's Road*, that is, use no Art, but deal in Simple, and at the same time, *compound*, and make Mixtures according to Art. And again, *follow Nature and God*. But, dropping the Beauties, let us see how we are to practise this Virtue.

Now,

Now, I think, it is plain, that a Man, in order to follow the Poet's Rule, must have a Power of calling together all his Passions, at once. That is, his Heart must be filled with Love and Hatred to, and Complacence, Anger and Vexation, &c. at one and the same Object, and at the same Time; and having thus catched all his Passions together, he must fall upon them and bruise them small in the Mortar of his Heart, and there make a soft Electuary, or an Emulsion of them, to be taken at proper Times. But this is a Virtue strangely unnatural, and the real Existence of it is as impossible, as the Existence of his one God; which it ought to be, that this great Teacher of *common Sense* may be consistent with himself.

But we need not take much Pains to shew this artificial Virtue impracticable, for he tells us himself that there is a Master Passion (Ep. ii. l. 121.) in the Breast, which like *Aaron's* Serpent, swallows up all the rest, whether simple or compound, and consequently destroys all Virtue.

And this Passion is so strong that it cannot by any Means be subdued, Reason itself being but a Slave to it.

*Nature its Mother, Habit is its Nurse,
Wit, Spirit, Faculties, but make it worse;
Reason itself but gives it Edge and Pow'r,
As Heaven's blest Beam turns Vinegar more sour.*

Ibid. l. 135.

This is telling us that Virtue is impossible, with mere Flesh and Blood, which indeed is true, and therefore not *common Sense*. But he is to be excused, because he had no Intention of deviating from

from its Rule, as appears from what he says a little before, for this mighty Serpent, or Master Passion, is God himself in the Soul; which is quite consistent with the above Description of his one God, who is the common Soul of all things. His Words are these:

*Nor God alone in the still Calm we find,
He mounts the Storm, and walks upon the Wind.*

Ibid. l. 99.

Which is plainly telling us, that it is not the serene and tranquil Soul only that God dwells in, but that he also rides in the Whirlwinds of the Passions, and seconds their Fury. This is a shocking Instance of Christian *common Sense*: how it flurs the Name of the one Father of all, to suppose that his Spirit of Holiness should mix with the impure Passions of Men, and drive them on to the fulfilling of their Lusts! and yet it must be so, except there be infernal Furies, to do this nasty Piece of Work for him, as Reason and Tradition teaches us Heathens to believe. Nothing can be done without the Gods above or below, for if any the most indifferent Action could be done without them, it is manifest every thing might. Was there the least Power lodged in the Will of Man, an infinite Power might be in it, for there is no such Thing as prescribing any Limits or Boundaries to Will. A stronger or weaker Will is a self-evident Absurdity. It is certainly as easy to move the everlasting Hills by mere Will, as it would be to move a Foot-ball. If Power then was planted any where but in the Will of the Gods, Men and Elements would be the real Gods, and those whom we call Gods would

would be mere Cyphers, possessing the empty Title only. But I would not be understood here as if I meant that Power was inherent in the Will of the inferior Gods, any more than in Men, but only that they are Instruments in the Hands of the supreme God, and that Men are Instruments in the Hands of the Gods, as Horses are in the Hands of the Riders. And therefore as a Horse would not run upon Destruction, in the bloody Front of the Battle, if a Man did not ride him, so neither would a Man fall into a bloody Passion, and distribute Death and Wounds to those about him, if the infernal Furies did not ride him in the same Manner. This must be true, or all Beings would naturally be independent of the one Supreme, and no one of them could have a Right to command another, and the whole Creation might be as free as the *Britons*, and make Virtue and Vice to be what they pleased, at any Time, as our ingenious Poet does here: for we are going to see him vary his Scheme again. Thus:

*This Light and Darknefs in our Chaos join'd,
What shall divide? The God within the Mind.
Tho' each by Turns the other's Bounds invade,
As, in some wellwrought Picture, Light and Shade,
And oft so mix, the Diff'rence is too nice,
Where ends the Virtue or begins the Vice:
Fools! that from hence into the Notion fall,
That Vice or Virtue there is none at all.
If White and Black blend, soften, and unite
A Thousand Ways, is there no Black and White?*

Ep. ii. l. 180.

Here

Here it is first to be observed, that by Light he either means the mild Passions only, such as Love, Sympathy, Complacence, &c. or any of the Passions when they turn upon Things commendable; and by Darknes the contrary to these. Now he seems to say, it is *God within the Mind* which divides or separates these Passions one from another, that there may be constant Vicissitudes, as it were, of Light and Darknes, or Night and Day, in the Soul. And though one would think that he meant the Light was Virtue, and the Darknes Vice, because he says, that it is hard to distinguish where the Virtue ends, or the Vice begins; yet he does not. For it is plain, from what follows, that he thinks it is God in the Soul who mixes the Darknes and the Light, and thereby makes the Soul black and white. And it is this Mixture of the Passions which he calls Virtue, as has been observed above. Only here the Mixture is made by God in the Soul, whereas, in his former Prescription, Man was to do it himself. Now the grand Objection to this Sort of Virtue is, that it can exist no where, but in Imagination, because these contrary Qualities would mutually destroy one another, and the Subject, they are supposed to inhere in, being divested of its essential Properties, would be annihilated. But he is aware of this, and thinks he can answer it.

*Fools! (says he) who from hence into the Notion fall,
That Vice or Virtue, there is none at all.*

This is his Way of expressing the Objection I have here advanced, and here follows his Answer.

If White and Black blend, soften, and unite

A Thousand Ways, is there no Black and White?

But this is only *common Sense*. For though some of the Parts of a Body may be black and others white, yet the Whole, considered as Unity or simply One, cannot be black and white, any more than it can be hot and cold, that is, at one and the same Time. If this be not plain enough let the Parts of a Body be considered as Unities, Indivisibles, or so many Individuals, then it is plain that one of these Parts may be black at the same Time that another Part is white, but it cannot be black at the same Time that it is white itself. And so we are to reason of any Whole, or individual Being; as Virtue, which is an ideal Being, if White be an essential Property of it, Black cannot also be so. For it is impossible to make Virtue, if essentially white, to be essentially black; all that is possible is to annihilate the white Virtue, or the white Essence, or Being, and to create a black Being in its stead, which is not the Thing proposed to be done. And therefore though there be such Things as Black and White, and likewise Light and Darkness, yet no simple, individual Essence, Being, Atom, or whatever we consider as one, or uncompounded, can have two such contrary Qualities as Black and White, any more than Light can be both Darkness and Light, or One be simply and indivisibly One, and yet Two. Whatever is essentially any Thing, as good, bad, black or white, cannot possibly be essentially the contrary, and therefore there can be no God that is essentially good and bad, true and false, nor consequently any Virtue, that is essentially

essentially good and bad, black and white, or essentially spotted.

But our Poet goes on with his party-coloured Virtue,

*'Tis but by Parts we follow Good or Ill,
For, Vice or Virtue Self directs it still.* Ib. l. 221.

Certainly this Poet has attended to nothing but the Sound of his Words, when he was writing. If one Selfishness be the Spring of all human Actions, they must either be all good, or all bad, for the Quality of Actions depends intirely upon the internal Disposition of the Agent, and are good and bad, as his Heart is, both with regard to himself, and as he stands related to the Gods; though as he stands related to his Fellow-Creatures, his bad Actions may be all good. O how strange are the Ways of *Christian common Sense* to a thinking Heathen! who would have thought that Mr. *Pope* would have attempted to prove Virtue to be spotted or party-coloured, from one's Self being the Spring of Action, seeing it manifestly proves the direct contrary. Surely if the Tree be good, the Fruit must be good, and if it be bad, the Fruit must be so too. There is no such Thing as mixing Good with Evil, in any Disposition, or Temper of Soul. If Selfishness be good, it must be unblameably so, and so on the contrary, because one and the same Self cannot be naturally both; the Supposition implies a Contradiction, and shews the Thing impossible. It is true indeed that a Man cannot lay aside himself, in whatever he does, whether Good or Evil. But if Virtue and Vice be Opposites to each other,

one and the same Self cannot be the Spring of Action, in both Cases.

To understand this, it ought to be considered, that as the Body of Man is as nothing without the Soul, so the Soul is nothing without the Spirit, and the Spirit is nothing without the Gods. And as there are good and bad Gods, which must be true, except there could be such a Being as Mr. Pope's black and white God, there must be Spirits good and bad. And as the Soul can do nothing without one of these Spirits, it is manifest that a Man at one time may differ as much from himself, at another time, as the two Spirits, viz. the good and the bad, differ; and that is manifestly all the Difference of two Individuals. When the Spirit therefore of the holy Gods actuates the Soul of a Man, he can do nothing, but what is virtuous and agreeable to their Mind: and on the contrary, if the Soul of Man be actuated by the Spirit of the evil Gods, he can do nothing but according to the Mind of those Gods. For the Spirits of the Gods always obey their Will, as naturally and as necessarily as the Members of the Body, or rather the Animal Spirits, obey the Will of Man, we may be very sure, because otherwise they would be no Gods, (vid. p. 23.) Now every Thing is itself, and not another. The Man then who is actuated by the evil Spirit, and therefore does nothing but what is evil, is one Self; and the same Man, if at another time he receive the good Spirit, which will make him do every Thing that is good, is another Self. And thus it is plain, that though Self be the Spring of all human Actions, as Mr.

Pope

is making
a man
himself,
or not
inhabitable.

Pope says, yet it is not one and the same Self that is both virtuous and vicious, any more than it is the same Tree which brings forth good and evil Fruit. And as these two Spirits cannot both together work the human Soul, any more than Light and Darkneſs can dwell together, it is ma-ni-feſt that a ſpotted, or black and white Virtue, has no Exiſtence but in the confuſed Head of a Man of *common Senſe*, who cannot admit any Thing for Truth, except it be abſolutely impoſſible to be ſo. And the Reaſon of this is, be-
 ca-uſe every Soul muſt be itſelf and not another, whether wiſe or fooliſh, according to the Spirit that is in it.

How much nobler are the Sentiments of our Heathen Poet than thoſe of the Chriſtian, con-cerning Virtue? How far was the ſhocking No-tion of a black and white Virtue from the Thoughts of Horace? When he ſaid,

Virtus repulſæ neſcia ſordidæ

Intaminatis fulget honoribus :

Nec ſumit, aut ꝑonit ſecures

Arbitrio popularis auræ.

Virtue feels not the Baulks and Diſappointments of mean and ſordid Souls, but ſhines with intaminated and unſpotted Honours ; becauſe ſhe courts not Pre-ferment for popular Applauſe, nor does ſhe unwillingly reſign as if ſhe was aſhamed to ſink again into private Life, or afraid of being contemned by the unthinking Vulgar.

Horace's Virtue, we ſee, is not like that of the Chriſtian, it is pure and unſpotted, and not at all founded on a mean and ſordid Selfiſhneſs, but, as he adds,

Virtus,

*Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
Cælum, negata tentat iter via, &c.*

Lib. iii. Od. 2.

*She aspires at Heaven, grasps at Life immortal,
and on soaring Wing looks down with Contempt on
the World below.*

But what would *Horace* have thought if he had read this humble Christian Poet, who dares not presume to think of Heaven for fear of being condemned as *Lucifer*, for Pride and Ambition? Hence he says,

*In reasoning Pride (my Friend) our Error lies :
All quit their Sphere, and rush into the Skies ;
Pride is still aiming at the blest Abodes ;
Men would be Angels, Angels wou'd be Gods.
Aspiring to be Gods if Angels fell,
Aspiring to be Angels Men rebel,
And who but wishes to invert the Laws
Of Order, sins against th' eternal Cause.*

Ep. i. l. 119.

But if aiming at the celestial Abodes be Pride, then it will undeniably follow, that *Jesus Christ*, whom the Christians call the Author of their Religion, taught nothing but Pride and Ambition; for he commanded his Disciples to seek the Kingdom of Heaven above all Things, and before all Things. How can a Christian talk then as this impious Poetaster does? Why, indeed, the true Reason is, the modern Christians are ashamed of *Jesus Christ*, because he was not a Man of *common Sense*, which is certainly true, for his infinitely better Sense could not allow him to be so. But a little before, that he may for ever be inconsistent, he owns that God put into Men

Men the Hopes of Immortality and future Happiness, which I think is a Hope of being like the immortal Gods, whom he (not improperly) calls Angels. (Ep. i. l. 90.) But still he allows the humble Choice of the ignorant *Indian*, (ibid. l. 95.) who aspires not at the Happiness of Angels, nor desires any better Company than his Dog, in a very homely Elysium, at the back of some Mountain, or in a dark Wood, to be wiser than that of Jesus Christ and his Followers, because he thinks there was less Pride in it. But this Humility of the *Indian* is like the Humility of a Hog when he wallows in the Mire, it is founded on Ignorance, or a want of nicer Taste, and better Sense, and therefore, I think, can have no great Merit in it. And as our Men of *common Sense* and *party-coloured Virtue*, approve of such *Hottentot* Humility, it is an indubitable Sign of their having the same hoggish Souls; for none but Creatures of a Kind, or of the same Spirit, can be like-minded, or at all associate with one another.

But let us see how he proves this celestial Order, which filled the Breasts of the Disciples of Jesus Christ, as also of our Heathen Heroes, as *Horace* intimates to us, to be Pride. And that is, first by affirming that the Angels fell by aspiring to be Gods, which is absolutely false, because they always were Gods, or, at least, so titled both by our Heathens, and also by the sacred Oracles of the holy Gods of the *Hebrews*, who cannot lie. And secondly, when he says that Men rebel against Heaven, by aspiring to be Angels, his Words have a double Meaning, and therefore
though

though what he says be *common Sense*, yet it is by no Means honest Sense. For there are two Ways that Men may aspire at being like Angels; first by seeking Divine Honours, or such Honours as are due only to the Father, which the evil Gods were always guilty of doing. But this is uncommon with Men, and foreign to Mr. *Pope's* Purpose here. And the second and only other Way of attempting to be like Angels, is in Men's endeavouring to be like the good Angels; in all Holiness, Purity, and unspotted Virtue. And this is what this Enemy to all true Virtue calls Pride, and inverting the Order of Nature and sinning against God: which is preaching up Vice in a most dangerous Manner. For it is teaching Men to take it for Virtue, and consequently making them believe they are most virtuous, when they are most vicious. Nay, when they are totally corrupted in their Manners, and regard no Laws, human nor divine, according to him, they are in a State of Perfection: (vid. p. 9.) because *whatever is, is right*. And lest any should dare to deviate from this general Rule of Corruption and gross Vice, he threatens them with the Danger of sinning against the eternal Cause, the natural Consequence of which, he assures them, will be the bringing down of the Heavens about their Ears.

And, indeed, if an Effect could sin against its Cause, such a Thing as this might happen. For it ought to be observed here, that when God is considered as a Cause, then the Creature, in that Point of View, ought to be considered barely as an Effect: and an Effect sinning against its Cause, is
the

the same as Light sinning against the Sun, or a Body to be moved resisting a sufficient impelling Force; which is excellent *common Sense*, to be sure: but good Sense will tell us that a Creature cannot sin against God in its physical, but only in its moral Capacity; that is, it can only offend him as its Lord and Master, King, or Lawgiver; but always in its physical Capacity it must obey him, and live or die, be or not be, according to his Word.

His *common Sense* makes him fancy that the whole Creation is like a Machine, or a Work of Art; which is a Thing impossible, because Motion, which first owed its Beginning to arbitrary Will, and could no other Way have begun, would afterwards have been continued by, as it were, a mechanical Will, and therefore the Powers in Nature, by which Motion is continued, and which, in the Beginning, must have been naturally, and consequently necessarily, subject to the arbitrary Will of the first Mover, must afterwards have become naturally subject to a mechanical Will, arising from a certain Combination of them in the Machine, which would be a self-evident Contradiction in the Nature of Things; and therefore a created or natural Machine is an utter Impossibility.

It is this absurd Notion then of the Creation's being a Machine, and the confounding of moral with natural Order, which makes Men of *common Sense* fancy, that whatever is must be right; and indeed granting them these Premises, which no Man of good Sense, or that has any right Notion of either a God or a Providence, will do, every

Thing in the Creation would have its own proper Place and Use, and the most notorious Villains, such as Parricides and Traitors to their King and their Country, perfidious and perjured Wretches, and such as trample upon all Laws, and blaspheme every Thing that is sacred, and deny the Being of the Gods, which naturally subverts all Truth and Virtue, would be eternally as necessary Parts of this imaginary Machine, as Men of the greatest Talents, Virtue, and Probity could possibly be: and the Destruction of these Destroyers of the World would be the Destruction of the Universe.

It is this extravagant Whim therefore, which this babbling Poetafter had in his Head when he went on rhiming like a Thing distracted, thus :

————— *On superior Powers*

*Were we to press, inferior might on ours ;
Or in the full Creation leave a Void,
Where, one Step broken, the great Scale's destroy'd :
From Nature's Chain whatever Link you strike,
Tenth, or ten Thousandth, breaks the Chain alike.*

.....
*The least Confusion, but in one, not all
Thy System only, but the Whole must fall.
Let Earth unbalanc'd from her Orbit fly,
Planets, and Suns, rush lawless thro' the Sky.
Let ruling Angels from their Spheres be hurl'd,
Being on Beings wreck'd, and World on World,
Heav'n's whole Foundation to the Center nod,
And Nature tremble to the Throne of God.*

Ep. i. l. 233.

How can the Christians bear with this Doctrine?
Surely if the turning of an Angel out of Heaven
would

would make such dreadful Havock, as this throughout universal Nature, the bringing of a Christian in there, would have the same Effects; and therefore, if this be true, we may be sure that neither Jesus Christ, nor any of his Followers ever entered into the Kingdom of Heaven, because the World that was in his Days, is still remaining as firm upon its Basis as ever.

Let the Wicked be wicked still therefore, and let the Saints sleep in the Dust; in a Word, let all Men keep their Ranks, or we shall all be crushed to Atoms by the sudden Hurl of the falling Heavens. Oh! the Unreasonableness of some Men, thought Mr. Pope; must this glorious Fabric be dissolved to gratify the Ambition of a few only who have lost all *common Sense*? Thou wicked Saint! thought he.

*All this dread Order break---for whom? for thee!
Vile Worm! O Madness! Pride! Impiety!*

Ibid. l. 250.

*Cease then, nor Order Imperfection name:
Our proper Bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own Point: this kind this due Degree
Of Blindness, Weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit---in this, or any other Sphere.
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear.*

Ibid. l. 273.

All Vice and Immorality is manifestly founded on the Imperfection and Weakness of the human Nature, and on Blindness of Mind. And though Man, while in the Flesh, must have some Frailties and Weaknesses, yet Blindness of Mind is in a great Measure owing to the Want of sound Education, and proper Discipline. And as the

first Step towards the Reformation of Mankind is to let them know their Faults, and make them sensible that they are not born Heirs to Virtue, but that it is the Work of their whole Life-time to acquire it, and keep it, what an egregious Corrupter of Manners must he be, who teaches Men to believe that their Sins are necessary Ingredients in the Composition of the great Whole, and contribute to keep up that Order in Nature, without which the Whole would be hurled back to Chaos in a Moment! But this, bad as it is, is not all, for we are told here, that not only human Frailties, but Blindness of Mind, which is the Condition of Men abandoned by the true Gods, and denied the Light of Truth, are kindly bestowed upon us by Heaven; which is calling them Divine Graces or Favours. An Expression, which, one would think, the Devil would have been ashamed of.

But if *common Sense* could distinguish Black from White, or Good from Evil, in Reasoning, it would become good Sense. Imperfections, Weakness, and Ignorance are certainly no more than mere Defects or Privations of Things real and substantial, and therefore to call them Gifts of Heaven, or even Endowments of Nature, though Men be born with them, is such an Absurdity as shews that Christian *common Sense* itself is not an Endowment of Nature, but a Judgment inflicted on them by Heaven for something they or their Forefathers have been guilty of.

Surely if the Imperfections of the human Nature be Gifts of Heaven, as Mr. *Pope* would have us believe, then we ought to thank the Gods for them,

them, and rejoice, saying : O happy Blindness, Ignorance and Stupidity ! O ! most comfortable Lust, dear Joy of our Hearts. O ! stately Ambition and Heaven-born Pride, the Gods have blessed us with you. And though this would shock a Heathen, yet Mr. *Pope* will allow it ; for he says here, that if Man will submit to these Conditions of imperfect Nature, he may be sure to be as happy as he can bear.

But good Sense will tell us, that the Father of all would have been more glorified in making perfect than imperfect Creatures, and therefore the true Reason of his leaving them imperfect or unfinished, in this Life, could never have been because he loved to leave them so, but because after he had brought them so far forward as to be sensible of their Existence, and susceptible of Pain and Pleasure, Happiness and Misery, he could not have carried them further without their own Consent, because his so doing would have made them more miserable, instead of more happy, than now they find themselves. The Gifts of Heaven are as contrary to the Endowments of inferior Nature, as Light is to Darkness, and therefore till the Creature gives its Consent to part with the sensual and brutal Happiness arising from the latter, God cannot give it the former without making it unspeakably miserable, or rather quite marring it. And therefore the Creator waits till he be prayed to for heavenly Gifts, and gives them not till the Creature hunger for them, and then, and then only he knows it will be benefited by them, and made to grow up to that Perfection he designed for it. And as the
Father

Father must constantly aim at the promoting of his own Glory, and consequently at the ultimate Happiness of his Creatures, because the one End is not compassed without the other, nothing can more offend him, nor be more pernicious to his Creatures, than to teach them to sit down contented with the brutal Happiness of Flesh and Blood, and yet this is manifestly the Sum of Mr. *Pope's* Morality; and therefore *common Sense* which, it will be allowed, Mr. *Pope* was an eminent Master of, is the great and only Cause of all Immorality, and all Divine Indignation against Mankind.

According to Mr. *Pope* and *common Sense*, it is in vain to pray to the Gods, because the World is a Machine, and they cannot stop a Wheel in it without incurring the Destruction of the Whole.

*Shall burning Ætna, if a Sage requires,
Forget to thunder and recall her Fires?*

*When the loose Mountain trembles from on High,
Shall Gravitation cease if you go by?*

Ep. iv. l. 120.

What, has his God given the Power of Gravity out of his Hands? or cannot he stop a falling Stone without letting the World fall? At this Rate he has less Power than Men, for, according to Mr. *Pope*, God is the Soul of the World, and the World is his Body, and if he cannot stop Motion in any Part or Member of his Body when he will, without stopping it in all the rest, it is manifest he must have much less Power over his own Body than we have over ours, and consequently must be a more imperfect Being than any.

any of us. But supposing he could suspend Gravity in any Part of the Universe, yet, according to the wise Mr. *Pope*, it would be a Weakness in him unbecoming his Divine Greatness. For,

*Think we, like some weak Prince, th' eternal Cause,
Prone for his Fav'rites to reverse his Laws.*

Ibid. l. 118.

Then to be sure, it would have been a Weakness in him to have saved a *Daniel*, a *Shadrach*, a *Meshech*, or an *Abednego*. But *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Darius*, both Heathens, judged better, for they thought this Kindness of the Gods of *Israel*, to their Favourites, shewed not a Weakness, but a Power, a Majesty, and a Greatness far surpassing that of their own Gods.

But has Mr. *Pope's* God no Pity at all for the Miserable? Oh no! it would disturb his Tranquillity. For,

*He sees with equal Eye, as God of all,
A Hero perish, or a Sparrow fall;
Atoms, or Systems into Ruin hurl'd,
And now a Bubble burst, and now a World.*

Ep. i. l. 83.

But what comes of the rest of the Machinery when such Accidents as these happen? For are we not taught to believe that the pulling out of a single Pin, in this great Fabric, would let the whole Universe tumble into Destruction? (Ep. i. l. 245.) but they who ask such impertinent Questions know not *common Sense*.

Dropping this impertinent Question then, especially as it cannot be answered; may it not be lawful to ask whether Mr. *Pope's* God has any
Regard

Regard for any Thing at all; since a Man, whether virtuous or vicious, is no more in his Eyes than a Worm, nor a World than a Bubble? Why yes; for to this we have an Answer, *viz.* that all his Care is bestowed on the Whole, notwithstanding his total Neglect of all the Parts! for though

Each Individual seeks a sev'ral Goal.

*Yet Heav'n's great View is one, and that the whole,
That counter-works each Folly and Caprice,
That disappoints th' Effects of ev'ry Vice.*

*That Virtue's Ends from Vanity can raise,
Which seeks no Int'rests, no Reward but Praise.
And builds on Wants, and on Defects of Mind
The Joy, the Peace, the Glory of Mankind.*

Ep. ii. l. 233.

But is it the Effects of Vice on the vicious Individual, or on the whole Community, that God disappoints? On the Whole, to be sure, and not on the Individual. For if the Individual would be happy, it must not be a Fool, but think right and mean well. (Ep. iv. l. 30.) But then that would be breaking all Order and Harmony in the Whole. For,

All Discord's Harmony not understood,

And

All partial Evil's universal Good.

Ep. i. l. 283.

But since private Vices are thus made public Benefits, ought not Vice to be encouraged as much as Virtue? A Man of *common Sense* would think so; but the Magistrate seems to think otherwise, and therefore he rewards it at Tyburn. In short,
Vice

Vice is forsaken at last by all her Friends, even by all the Men of *common Sense*, which, if Mr. *Pope* be right, is not doing her Justice.

But our Author after all knows not what to call Happiness, therefore he says,

Ask from the Learn'd the Way, the Learn'd are blind,

This bids to serve, and that to shun Mankind:

Some place the Bliss in Action, some in Ease,

These call it Pleasure, and Contentment these:

Who thus define it, say they more or less

Than this, that Happiness is Happiness.

Ep. iv. l. 19.

Yes, they say a great deal more, with the Leave of *common Sense*; for he who places it in doing public Services to Mankind, denies it of the Hermit. And he who places it in Action, denies it of Ease. And he who places it in Pleasure, denies it of Contentment. And though Contentment bids fairest for it, yet it is not Happiness because it supposes Hardships and Difficulties; things inconsistent with a happy State, which, by a Resignation of Will, a Thing not easily gained, nor easily retained, it bears with an Equanimity, supported by force of Reason and Strength of Faith. Now this is manifestly a militant State of the Soul, but true Happiness can be founded on nothing but the Perfection of human Nature, it being manifestly inconsistent with the Infirmities of Mortals. And therefore our Heathen Poet says truly. — *Dici beatus ante obitum nemo, supremaque funera debet.* That is, *No Man ought to be called happy before his Death.* But the Christian Poet knows nothing of Per-

fection, or else he would not endeavour to persuade Men that they are as perfect as they ought to be, which is telling them that they are as virtuous as they ought to be, for true Virtue is nothing but the Refinement of the human Nature, and the weaning of the Soul from brutal or animal Desires. Man as an Animal is as perfect as he ought to be, without Doubt, but as such he has no more Virtue than a Hog or a Goat has. Benevolence itself is far from being a Virtue, though it be an excellent Quality when it proceeds from the right Spirit, and renders Men like the good Gods. But the Spirit of the false Gods (see p. 28.) can mimic it in the mere animal Soul, and therefore a Man who is drowned in Sensuality, and void of every Virtue, may, notwithstanding that, be eminently benevolent. As certainly as there are Gods true and false, and not one black and white Animal God only, according to *common Sense*, and consequently true and false Spirits in Nature, which is as true that there is a Right and a Wrong, there must also be a true, and a false Benevolence; and if so, it is manifest that a Man may be very benevolent, and yet neither good nor virtuous.

And as the Pleasure a Man has in doing benevolent Actions will be the same whether his Benevolence be true or false, this shews how exceedingly precarious and deceitful that Happiness must be, which is founded on Benevolence alone. And hence we may see how dangerous this Poet's best Account of human Happiness must be, after he has given his Reader many, various and foolish Conjectures on that Subject, which is this.

Remember

*Remember, Man! the universal Cause
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral Laws;
 And makes, what Happiness we justly call,
 Subsist, not in the Good of One but All.
 There's not a Blessing Individuals find,
 But some Way leans and hearkens to the Kind:
 No Bandit fierce, no Tyrant mad with Pride,
 No cavern'd Hermit rests self-satisfy'd;
 Who most to shun, or hate Mankind pretend,
 Seek an Admirer or wou'd fix a Friend.
 Abstract what others feel, what others think,
 All Pleasures sicken, and all Glories sink.*

Ep. iv. l. 34.

This is telling us that Men can enjoy nothing at all without having some body to share with him, which Temper of Mind is the natural Foundation of animal Benevolence to be sure, and as it is a general Law of Nature, as he observes here, it must be in Brutes as well as Men, and we know it is so; for many of them shew by their Actions, that they feel in their Hearts both the social and sympathetic Laws of Nature. And this Benevolence, which I call Animal, because it is an Endowment of animal Nature, to distinguish it from what is called Charity in the holy Oracles, which is a spiritual Endowment produced in Man by the Spirit of the true Gods, is undoubtedly attended with Pleasure, but such animal Pleasures neither constitute the real Happiness nor Virtue of Men; or if they do, there is a great deal of Happiness, justly so called, to use the Poet's own Words, and likewise of Virtue and Morality among Swine, for both the social and sympathetic Laws of animal Nature, upon which this

Benevolence is founded, are very strong in them. And as this Benevolence is all the Virtue Mr. Pope knew any thing of, as appears from his Description of it, mentioned above, and likewise from his calling any thing more sublime, spiritual and refined, *quitting Sense to imitate God*: (Ep. ii. l. 26.) that is *common Sense*, or that *common Whore* of the Christians, which debauches all Mankind, we are to understand him as speaking of it, when he says:

*Know then this Truth, (enough for Man to know)
Virtue alone is Happiness below :*

*The only Point where human Bliss stands still,
And tastes the Good, without the fall to Ill;
Where only Merit constant Pay receives,
Is blest'd in what it takes, and what it gives :
The Joy unequall'd if its End it gain,
And if it lose, attended with no Pain.*

Ep. iv. l. 299.

I say, this is manifestly animal Benevolence, and not Virtue, though he calls it so, that he is here describing, which any Highwayman, any Impostor, any Betrayer of his King and Country, or any Sot may have a Share of; and yet it is manifest such Men can have no Virtue in them. For Virtue is brave, true, faithful, longanimous, patient, constant in both Fortunes, sober, temperate, and victorious over all animal Appetites. It is she alone which dignifies and sublimates the Nature of Man, and gives him a Relish for the Happiness of the Gods, which would be so far from giving Pleasure, that it would give the most vivid Pain to the Animal or imperfect Man.

It ought likewise to be remarked here, that when he says, Virtue alone is Happiness below, he deceives the unthinking Reader ; for Happiness below supposes a Happiness above, but he could have had no such Thing in View, first because he here says, this earthly Happiness is enough for Man to know, and secondly, because it is inconsistent with his Notions both of God and Virtue to believe in the Existence of Spirits, or of any invisible World. For his God is as visible as Man is, because the Universe, as has been already observed from him, is his Body, and if that was true, it is manifest there could be no invisible World of Spirits. And thirdly, because he says expressly himself that it was Superstition

*That taught the Weak to bend, the Proud to pray
To Pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they.*

*She from the rending Earth, and bursting Skies,
Saw Gods descend, and Fiends infernal rise. &c.*

Ep. iii. l. 251.

Now, what more than this can be done to corrupt the Manners of Mankind, and to open the Way to such a lawless Liberty as must at last be out of the Power of the Magistrate to restrain, or keep within any due Bounds? But this still is not all, for it is laying a Stumbling-block in the Way of us Heathens, and preventing our ever coming to the Knowledge of the true Gods, that we may be saved. For we know that our Gods really exist, though some of us know that they are no Gods, that is, in Comparison of the true Gods. The Christians of *common Sense* imagine that negative Properties have no Subjects : Goodness or Truth is something, but Badness, Falshood

or

or Vanity, is nothing; that is, they are not real Properties of any Thing, but mere Privations, Imperfections, or the Want of something; but would any Body, but a Man of *common Sense*, conclude from hence that a Being, with these Wants, was no Being, or had no Existence? If a Man be in want of Health, want of Strength, want of Wisdom, want of Learning, want of Money, want of Reputation, and consequently want of Credit, has he therefore no Existence? Or because Sickness, Weakness, Folly, and Ignorance are mere Privations or Wants of the contrary Realities, will it thence follow that no such thing as a sick, weak, foolish or ignorant Man exists? Surely no. But so I argue concerning the Existence of the evil Gods. When the sacred Oracles of the holy Gods therefore say that our Gods are no Gods, they do not mean that they have no Existence, nay, they declare the contrary, as I could prove, but only that they have not the real Properties or Perfections of a God, strictly so called, such as Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Truth, and therefore they are no more Gods, nor Saviours to Man in Distress, than an old Trunk of a Tree.

Though Evil, Falshood, Vanity, and Folly be nothing, or mere Privations of the contrary Realities, yet they exist, and consequently their Subjects must also exist; or if these negative Properties may exist without any Subject, then the contrary or positive Properties may also exist without any Subject, and then there may be no Gods, good or bad.

In a Word, if the inferior Gods have no Existence there can be no Christ, for he is one of them.* Or if there be no evil Gods, there can be no good, nor holy Gods. For holy supposes unholy; and a beloved God, as Christ is said to be, supposes others that are not beloved. Can a Father say, with good Sense, of a Son, This is my beloved Son, if he has but one Son? Surely no, any more than he call him his eldest Son, because that supposes another younger: and yet *common Sense* must allow of this, or own herself ignorant of every Thing, and entirely void of all Understanding, as she really is. When the Christians therefore would persuade us Heathens that our Gods have no Existence, we cannot hearken to them, because we esteem such Doctrine as that to be Atheism. For the Non-Existence of our Gods does not prove the Existence of the Gods of the Christians, as they imagine, but the direct contrary. And therefore except they can be persuaded to renounce their *common Sense* they cannot convert, but corrupt and pervert both us and themselves.

It is likewise perverting and corrupting Mankind to teach them, as this Poet does, that natural Evils are mere Accidents, and that there is no Anger in the Gods.

What makes all physical or moral Ill?

There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.

God sends not Ill, 'tis Nature lets it fall,

Or Chance escape, and Man improves at all.

Ep. iv. l. 109.

How can Nature deviate, except God, who, according to this Author, is the Soul of it, be asleep,

asleep, like *Baal*, or gone abroad, and neglected to leave one at the Helm? Nothing certainly in Nature can stir without an Agent, the whole visible Creation is but Matter, and Matter once at Rest would never move again without the Will of an Agent, and therefore as the Thunder does not always roar, nor the Winds always blow, it is manifest to any one not infatuated by *common Sense*, that when at Rest they would never begin to stir again, without the Hand of an Agent. And therefore *Horace* says with good Reason,

Cælo tonantem credidimus Jovem regnare.

Carm. Lib. iii. Ode 5.

The Thunders roaring on high have taught us to believe that Jove is at the Helm.

But *common Sense* cannot believe this, because she is always dreaming of Machines, second Causes, or, which is the same, her Goddess's *Chance*; for no Cause below a living Agent, can do any more towards producing any Effect in Nature, that is not continually produced, than Flint and Steel can do towards making a Fire; and this is the Reason why we Heathens believe that there are Gods who preside over the Elements, and raise Storms and Tempest, Plague and Pestilence, at the Command of the Supreme, and this, a Christian must know, is likewise Scripture Doctrine (2 Sam. xxiv. 16.) but *common Sense* is mad at Scripture Doctrine, because she never had a Capacity to understand it, nor ever will.

Secondly, how can there be any Love in God if there be no Anger in him? for this Poet says, that Men

No

*No Ill could fear in God, and understood
A sov'reign Being but a sov'reign Good.*

Ep. iii. l. 237.

Certainly he can never have any Love or Regard for his Creatures, if he be not angry with them when they do Harm to themselves, for they have no other way to offend him, but by hurting themselves, and if he can behold this with an indifferent Eye, as this Author says he does (p. 39.) he can have no more Regard for them than a dumb Idol may. And therefore Mr. *Pope's* God is no more a God than an Image of Wood or Stone.

To teach Men to believe that there is no Anger in God, as *common Sense* does, is the certain way to make them bold, and daring, and impious, enough to bid Defiance to Heaven, as the daily Cursing and Swearing among Christians manifestly shews they do. And therefore *common Sense* is the chief, if not the sole Cause of the great Corruption of Christian Manners, and consequently a great Stumbling-block in the Way of Heathens: which was the Thing to be proved.

F I N I S.

